

A SHORT
HISTORY^{3.}
OF LATE
Ecclesiastical Oppressions
IN
NEW-ENGLAND and VERMONT,

By a CITIZEN.

IN WHICH IS EXHIBITED
A STATEMENT OF THE
VIOLATION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES,
WHICH ARE RATIFIED BY THE
Constitution of the United States.

RICHMOND:
PRINTED BY JAMES LYON, AT THE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE,

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A SHORT HISTORY
OF LATE
ECCLESIASTICAL OPPRESSIONS,
&c.

THE solicitude of many, to be possessed of a view of the proceedings in the states of Vermont and New-Hampshire, as to the church land, has led the writer of this to present it to the public, in the form of a pamphlet. He is also prompted to the task, in order to remove the misinformation which has deluded some, and to inform the candid and upright: He trusts that his testimony will not want the aid of his declaring, that he has been intimately acquainted with the subject for thirty years, and has resided chiefly for twelve years past amidst those states and those lands.

Before the late revolution in America, and while the lands north of Massachusetts were chiefly uninhabited, those territories now called New-Hampshire and Vermont, were granted away by the then government, by valid charters. In the uses to which the lands were assigned, four rights consisting of three hundred acres each, were reserved in the respective townships for public uses. One of these was for a school, a second, for the first minister who should settle in those new townships—a third, for the society in London, for propagating the gospel in foreign parts, and a fourth, as a glebe, for the perpetual benefit of ministers in communion of the church of England.

These respective rights were surveyed accordingly, and allotted to their particular uses. But the leading patentees, in apportioning lots to their respective proprietors, named in the charters, exchanged those assigned, to absent men, unrepresented schools, ministers and ecclesiastical bodies, for those of less value, which had fallen to themselves in dividing the townships.

Thus the value of the public rights was lessened in the beginning. The school and first minister's right, indeed found some to defend them, but trespass and spoil were constantly committed upon the church lots.

Many of those apportioned to the schools were sold, and thereby the property devoted to the educating of children, was rendered of little value in many places, in order to promote some private man's advantage.

The lots assigned to the first ministers who should settle in these townships, have almost totally fallen into the hands of the congregational ministers, as their property in fee. During the war, many of this order removed from Connecticut and Massachusetts into New-Hampshire and Vermont. They readily accepted the invitations to settle, and secured

these lots to themselves, by the accustomed formalities, pointed out by law and usage in these states. As the people were poor and the settlements new, poverty on their part caused contentions between the ministers and people, as to their salaries. The doctrines and discipline of the ministers were offensive. The ministers would not relax, and resigned their places or obtained dismissals from their ecclesiastical councils, which introduced them into other parishes.—By this management of the ministers and councils, some of the former obtained a second and third right, and thus became rich and influential. Deserting their functions, they became independent farmers, land jobbers, justices, judges, military men, and lawyers.

In the course of twenty years, that part of so extensive a property for supporting a religion, has been totally lost, from the avarice and want of disinterestedness and prudence on the part of the ministers.

In but few instances has it been the means of effecting any real good, in planting, or maintaining religious institutions. The feuds and lawsuits, between ministers and people have totally absorbed all benefit, and the expences upon the people in consequence of these altercations have exceeded the value of the lands. Thus a double loss has accrued to them, and the liberal designs of their government were defeated as to planting religion.

The clergy who emigrated thither, were chiefly of the sect called Edwardians. Ethan Allen and other Deists, opposed the clergy and the christian religion, from hatred to the doctrines which this sect taught, the tyrannical discipline which it had adopted, and the bigotry which has ever rendered it obnoxious.

In addition to this emigration of ministers from Connecticut and Massachusetts, caused by the ministerial lots, the people allured them into Vermont and New-Hampshire, that a pretext might be afforded from the effects and zeal to gain ministers to lead the legislature to grant them laws for levying taxes upon non resident's lands, in order to build meeting-houses, and pay the enormous expence attending the settling and ordaining of a congregational minister.

By this project and device, the people secured the lands of private persons to themselves, out of the property of widows, orphans, & their fellow-citizens, whose circumstances were injured by war. Piety and pity had no influence in restraining such fraudulent practices.

Obliquy and reproach however were brought upon the ministers;—many were dismissed, and the meeting-houses fell into decay; after they had been fully improved as a pretext, by which, under a shew of regard for the supporting of religion, they had only gained lucrative advantages for the speculators and fraudulent enactors of such laws.

To shut the kingdom of Heaven more effectually against men, the Edwardians had excluded infants from baptism, because one or both of their parents were not members in full communion. These children and their parents generally became Deists.

To render the condition of the people more deplorable, and the progress of religion less effectual, the divines in the counties of Litchfield and Berkshire opposed actively and obstinately the introduction of any other ministers into Vermont, than the Edwardians.

Such candidates as were not of their party were treated with neglect by doctor West, of Stockbridge, and others, who reside on the way into

Vermont, from Massachusetts and Connecticut. They would not give them letters or testimonials to introduce such into parishes, who did not follow the polemic divinity, or support the usurping and ambitious designs of the Edwardians. This sect have sought for many years to obtain the sway in church and state, and have but too well succeeded by means of school divinity, and a power they have gained by attempts to monopolize the education of youth into their hands.

Dartmouth college, on the river Connecticut, in a central situation between Vermont and New-Hampshire, connived at the Edwardian doctrines, discipline and designs, under the expectation of pecuniary aid from the party, which was not obtained. It was in part fostered by them, for the purpose of gratifying the ambition and avarice of those who wished to obtain the church lands for their sect, and lucrative purchasers and political power for their lay adherents.

Endless were the confusions which resulted from their efforts to reduce the people to Edwardian rules. It may with great justice be said, that in no instance did perfect harmony or prosperity attend the settlement of a minister. The obtaining of ministerial lots, building meeting-houses, and selling non-resident's lands to pay the expence incurred by such men and such measures, had too large a share in leading the people to form congregations not to be seen and resisted, when it was too late to amend,

From hence, in part it is, that the religious affairs of Vermont are in so deplorable a condition as at present; taught to believe that the christian religion was good and true, a large majority of the people, conscientiously wished to enjoy and provide for the support of its institutions. But they had not abandoned that system in New-England, which has attempted by war, sacrilege, polemic divinity, schisms, divisions and parties about religion, to obtain power and riches for the great men and ministers.

That the representation of the ruinous condition of religion in Vermont, may not appear to be exaggerated, we have to recur to facts of general notoriety. Complaints of the desolate state of Vermont reached Connecticut. The people were represented as "sheep without a shepherd." The intelligence was gladly received, as it gave an occasion for certain ambitious laymen and ecclesiastics to gain vogue, by interesting themselves to provide for preaching in that state, and thus to gain greater sway and controul over its concerns of every kind, in order to obtain applause and favors for some in Connecticut.

The desolations of Vermont were depicted in plaintive terms—prayed and preached in public and private, in order to rouse the attention, expand the hearts, and open the purses of the credulous and unwary. The legislature granted a brief to collect money. Missionaries made short and rapid excursions, for which they were liberally rewarded. But their errand was offensive, excited ridicule and did much harm. Public strictures upon the design and execution of these errands were made in the newspapers, and the object was relinquished in consequence on the part of Connecticut.

After the late peace the influence of the clergy was lost. War had not promoted Godliness. The trumpet was laid aside in pulpits, and plowshares and pruning-hooks were needful, rather than inflammatory addresses to God or his people in religious assemblies.

Habituated to contemplate and discuss the controverted divinity taught in the the college, and from the pulpits in Connecticut. Collected from various parts of the country, under different champions, each of the emigrants into Vermont from the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts, became a stickler for his own tenets, in order to gain sway and enlist a party by whose votes he might gain promotion and popular power.

None gave way ; to resign an argument among such disputants, was to give up infallibility and influence. Each had gained the truth and illumination. His feelings and experiences confirmed him in them—he must be right. Many arrogantly and profanely pretended that they had received their light and knowledge by immediate inspirations and divine communications from above. Contracted divinity engrosses a principal part of the entertainment or employment in taverns and other public circles, in Vermont and the northern and eastern states. From this improper introduction of religion into mixed companies, such disputants have gained influence and reputation as pious men among the bigotted and credulous ; but a more baneful effect is, that by this want of reverence, this familiar treatment of so important a concern, religion is degraded and wounded by its own professors. Every subtilty and sophistry in argument, every effort at ridicule, satire and ribaldry take place almost invariably from these public discussions : The evil does not end here.—The triumph of the victor and chagrine of the vanquished excite coolness, rancour and malice with each other, which extends into their families, among their relations, into social circles, neighbourhoods, parishes and towns. New-England has always been disturbed in its religious and political affairs, by this adherence to school divinity. It is esteemed as the essence of christianity.

In this way religion is debased in Vermont and humbled in the dust. No part of North America can exhibit a more deplorable picture.

Benevolence, candor and forbearance have been trampled under foot in consequence of this rage for controversy, joined to injustice done to individuals, and spoil committed upon property reserved for religious uses, under their original charters.

Few agreeing in the most essential articles, they could not unite in establishing ministers and forming congregations after the opportunity to amass property by the fraudulent practices above described in the cause of their religion, or what they had adopted as such. The accustomed laxations for maintaining of christianity, were obnoxious, unpopular and obsolete, when wealth was no longer to be obtained under its standard.†

Great exertions were made at the first planting of Vermont to make the emigrants subservient to the congregational or independent sects.

All others were neglected and abused, that none but the true Puritan Israelites might reside there, lest they should resist the opinions, discipline, and politics of the clergy, who were pursuing their favorite plan by war, stratagem and sacrilege, to reduce all to Edwardeanism, or what is more properly styled and known by Illuminatism.—That union of church and state, of religion and politics, of rich lay men and ecclesiastics who wish to destroy every religion and government which do not accord with their ambition and wishes, or pursue their delusions.

The first emigrants into Vermont were a set of hardy enterprising land speculators. Among them were some who retired to that region from ad-

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verse affairs at home. These were followed by others who were poor or dishonest, who improved the opportunity afforded in that uncultivated region, to gain lands by trespasses ;—To give them a title by an abused pre-occupancy, laws were enacted by their first legislatures, after they assumed jurisdiction as an independent state.

With these disadvantages we need not say that the efforts to build meeting-houses and settle ministers were of no avail. To obtain rewards as agents and contractors, for erecting these houses, to gain contributions abroad, and aid from England and Scotland to assist their plans to cultivate literature, many united in the arrangements. Disinterestedness and integrity were too generally neglected. The property assigned for public uses did not answer the purposes which were originally expected. Laxness, deism, and disunion in religion took place.

A new expedient was projected to gain missionaries, books and aid from other states. The first efforts were but too successful. The missionaries visited them. Curiosity opened the ears of the people to hear the pastoral letter from Connecticut.

Some were alarmed for their religious and political liberties, as the designs of Edwardians in this particular were too obvious to be mistaken or to pass unnoticed. Others hoped that confusions in government would open the way into Canada. This was more probable, as the Edwardians were busy about the millenium and concerts of prayer which were directed against Roman Catholics. The Episcopalians and baptists, also retained a lively remembrance of the persecutions which they had endured in Massachusetts and Connecticut, previous to their removal into Vermont. The tyrannical taxations, and consequent imprisonments of many who would not be compelled under the sanction of law to support systems they neither believed nor followed, were not forgotten.—The combinations against the Roman Catholics, that they might not be tolerated in Canada, and the confederacy against the Episcopalians to prevent their having a valid Episcopacy were in remembrance also.

The Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists were convinced from many facts, that the Edwardians wished to extend their tyrannies into Vermont, and to increase their numbers and strengthen their power through the United States by those means.

Some of the missionaries transacted private business, concerning lands, and solicitously enquired the value of such at large.—Many of those who visited the interior parts of the state of New-York upon the same errand, having accumulated a sum of money and gained needful intelligence as to lucrative purchases in store, abandoned the clerical function and became land-jobbers and speculators.

The missionaries were ridiculed every where, and returned home with sorrow. The mortification, spleen and hypochondria, could not invent a tale like their model Brainard, whose book they had re printed to open the hearts and purses of their followers and gain the confidence of their flocks ; a book as dissimilar from Apostolic, or otherwise prudent and successful missions, as can be preserved in any christian country. Re-printing of it has done much damage, because it inspired many with an itch for political, enthusiastic and unsuccessful efforts to establish a party who wish to destroy our religious liberties and universal toleration, and to force their creeds upon reluctant consciences.

Exposed to obliquy and remarks, the missionaries published their journals. The then governor of the state, *with difficulty* procured a vote of the council by his casting voice to thank the clergy for their benevolent designs. This made a conspicuous figure in the printed reports at home, but was ridiculed in Vermont.

It was passed during the same session in which Ira Allen, esq. backed by some men high in office under that state, and in the national government, obtained a seizure of the church lands. These men wished to become popular in order to secure governmental favors and seats in congress. They had already acquired consequence by their adherence to Edwardeanism, or Illuminatism, and had not prudence, discretion and moderation sufficient to restrain them from arguing and cabaling against Episcopalians, Baptist and Methodist. The religion most of them professed they had debased to the purposes of ambition and avarice. Not duly reverencing their own, they could not be expected to be tender and forbearing to others.—The independence of Vermont and its laws and policy had gained them place, favor and property, and they hoped to retain what they already had acquired, and to gain more by encouraging sacrilege and restless bigots. General Allen's too eager graspings after wealth and lands had embarrassed him. Possessed of the largest tracts in Vermont, he yet sought for an opportunity by craft or war to gain more in Canada, as his subsequent conduct has fully evinced.

The globe would not afford acres sufficient to satisfy his propensity.—In his efforts to obtain a college in Burlington, on lake Champlain, he had promised a large donation in lands. And, to make further provision in order to enhance the value of those he already owned in Burlington, by obtaining a college to be erected there, he led in the petition for the church lands. His craft and designs were defeated as to himself and his interested mercenary views, and the lands were assigned for other purposes. After which he confessed he would not have brought the petition if he could have imagined the college would not have obtained the property. Foiled in this, he sent his nephew to London with other errands to purchase the lands upon credit of the society, for proaogating the gospel in foreign parts, as they were held in part by that body according to our laws. Similar was general Allen's effort, after his own late arrival in London.—But due notice had been forwarded in season, and the society's servants were on their guards.

The Edwardeans or Illuminati had squandered, as is above related, the lands they might legally possess for their own ministers, and bigotry, intolerance and avarice prompted them on to make spoil of those of the church. Planting religion did not dictate such proceedings, because they are directly opposed to its precepts. Preserving law, order, mutual confidence good will and brotherly love among christians at large, had no share in these transactions. The seizure was obtained by men addicted to intemperance, bigotry and intolerance. A group of vices which generally meet together in the designs of malice and frowardness.

During these proceedings, even while we were a branch of the British empire, efforts were made on the part of Episcopalians, by their bounty and services, to protect and introduce universal toleration, accompanied with learning and piety, into those uncultivated regions. A mission was established, and religious tracts were circulated gratis, upon all the sub-

time and interesting subjects of christianity. A charter and donations were bestowed for founding a college, in order to rear ministers. A divinity library was also given for the use of divinity students in that institution. After the breaking out of war, and our declaration of independence, the Episcopalians to the utmost in their power, sought to preserve the lands for the purposes of religion. Since the revolution and late peace they have formed congregations and supported ministers. These exertions were encreasing, and the people were collecting into religious order in their parishes, under the administration of the Episcopal clergy.—Both ministers and people were making great sacrifices of their time, cures and property, to provide for the religious institution of themselves and their families; joined to the regular worship of God, and observance of the sabbath, sacraments, piety, morality, and prosperity of the church and christians at large.

They also obtained the opinions of the most distinguished lawyers in New-York and elsewhere, as to the title of the church to those lands. To leave no honorable measure unattempted—to put religion upon its proper, stable and dignified station, they, in conformity to the opinion and advice of pious, learned, and prudent clergymen and lawyers, in other states, sought to procure the superintendence of a bishop, that they might enjoy the benefit and blessing of his labors, be united with the christian church by firmer bonds, save the property of the church from the attempts of the sacrilegious, and preserve it for posterity, and the maintainance of true religion for ever.

The Episcopalians were associated together as a convention and as congregations,—elected a bishop, and applied to the general convention for his consecration. They made every noble, upright, and conscientious and prudent arrangement in their power, to bring the lands into use for the support of religion, and relief of the people, from the clamors against supporting ministers by taxation. The lands were very generally under cultivation, and the tenants and trespassers were fully able to pay a rent for the enjoyment and use. No severity was attempted, complained of, or suspected. The Episcopal clergy endured many hardships, were industrious, indefatigable, and disinterested in their efforts to promote piety and place religion on a venerable foundation. They obtained every possible information from their superiors, brethren and friends, as to their rights, and modestly stated their condition, and the projects of the foes who wished to make wanton spoil upon the lands of the church.

To their astonishment however they saw general Allen and certain gentlemen and lawyers in Vermont, lead the legislature to a seizure and confiscation.

The following letter to gen. Washington, published at the request of many of America's best citizens and most distinguished leaders, affords a short but accurate statement of that transaction. It has been circulated through the states. It was published as a prelude to the opening of the subject of ecclesiastical oppressions, which have generally taken place, by illuminati influence throughout the states, since the year 1775.

* Dartmouth College, December 22d, 1794.

" SIR,

" The event which our church had good reason to expect, for many years, has taken place.

" The legislature of Vermont, at their last session, converted our glebes to other uses, than they were appropriated to by ancient grants and charters. The lands of the society in London, for propagating the gospel, are also seized upon as confiscate. The pretext for this is, that by the operation of the late treaty of peace, and the law of nature and nations, these lands had become forfeit, and of course, the property was vested in the state.

" Ira Allen, esq. introduced the measure by petition, from the trustees of the New College, for a conveyance of the society's lands, to that institution. His object was to enhance the value of the settlement of Burlington on Lake Champlain, of which he is chief proprietor, by building a seat of learning and providing a revenue for it, from this property of the society. These trustees are composed of the governor of the state, and the speaker of the house of assembly for the time being,—of the present district judge—one of the judges of the superior court, and several other laymen, joined with ministers of religion, from three denominations.

" The Episcopal clergyman however was not consulted upon the designed petition, although he is brother to the governor, and resides at the distance of only a few miles from the governor, Mr. Allen and Mr. Hitchcock, the district judge.

" Doctor Williams, now minister of Rutland, and formerly a professor and instructor in Cambridge college, and author of the Natural and Civil History of Vermont, may be said to be the father of these measures. He was offended, because we would not make him our bishop. His friends held him up, as a candidate for the president's chair, in the New College. Stephen Jacobs, esq. (under Doctor Williams's influence) ushered the seizure of our glebes into public debate in the legislature, of which he was a member. Mr. Jacobs was lately the attorney of the district of Vermont.

" Mr. Allen, by the independence and grants of Vermont, became possessed of extensive tracts of land. He has neglected to assign us our glebes in some towns, in which he is largely interested, until we considered ourselves bound to make a small purse, to enable one of our congregations, to sue for its right in that township. The action, however, was not commenced.

" Public officers, and men enriched by revolution, and places in the national and state governments, have effected a perversion of our glebes, in a state which observed a neutrality during part of the war, and was too feeble to render it any substantial aid. This, after eleven years peace, in contradiction also to the opinion of able statesmen and lawyers, and the whole church.

" The generals and other officers of the late army—the slain veteran and suffering citizen, have thus been made the means of wresting a property from us, which religion, liberty, law, honor and justice forbid every man, from converting to other than its original uses.

" This is but part of an uniform system, from the first settlement of America, to destroy the church.

" Printed histories and public papers confirm this idea. A new injury is intended to be added to those formerly done, by the legislatures of Massachusetts, New-Hampshire and Connecticut, aided by the governors, and the political, civil, and military influence of presidents Langdon, Stiles, Willard, Wheelock, and the colleges and clergy of New-England.

" The public files, authentic facts, and incontestible witnesses prove that my charge, as to the above bodies, officers and individuals, is true. They have often departed from their duty as christians, their honor as patriots, and their dignity as gentlemen, by taking public monies, and using improper influence in their stations, to injure the church and the societies of Methodists, Baptists, and others. By means of party colleges, unjust political and religious prejudices are excited against us; our children often meet with, and are exposed to injury in the northern schools and colleges, because of our religion.

" To present the facts which corroborate these charges, would be to write a volume. The materials are at my command. My duty calls me to the task.

" I hoped that my respectful correspondence, and the regular information I have given for several years, to my civil rulers who belong to the church, and to my ecclesiastical governors, would have saved our property by their aid. In pursuance of that uniform conduct, which belongs to me in my place, while life and health permit, I lay this before your Excellency, for a place in your files for the inspection of posterity. Copies of it will be sent to the bishops in the states for the same purpose.

" By the perseverance of our clergy and brethren, and by our mutual exertions, we were recovering our property, which is chiefly entered upon by trespassers, and is under considerable cultivation. Religion was about to extend in a more venerable degree than ever among professed christians, who are divided and contentious on so serious a subject.

" A plundered church, late complaining army, tumultuous insurrections, and avaricious desires to plunder the neighbouring provinces, do not accord with the honor and prosperity of a christian nation, or men proud of a successful war, an honorable peace, a good form of government, and flourishing affairs.

" The present ecclesiastical history of America, is a very exact transcript from the history of England, after the civil wars and revolution.

" Presbyterianism, owing its power and origin to the people, will always call the popular power to its aid. The majority will therefore determine what is truth and right, however ignorant, avaricious, or bigoted this majority may be.

" The clergy and churches in general are happy and useful in the provinces, while we are oppressed and ruined in the states. Witnesses to constant injury, we are scarcely permitted to speak, or remonstrate, in our defence. We are sold in an age, vainly boasted to be an age of reason, into the hands of men who dispute and revile christianity. Very many of our foes compose the councils, and frame the laws of America.

" Your Excellency remains as the disinterested friend of religion, liberty and law. May your administration be always blessed, in extending what is regular, and restoring what is right.

" I am most respectfully,

" Your Excellency's devoted servant."

General Washington had received from the author of this letter, notification for several years, of the designs and doings of a party, as to the church. He was requested *not to answer* the letters. They were merely to give him needful notice of the effects of war, and the integrity of patriots and clergymen, who had taken part with him, that he might not be made an instrument, by which the christian religion should be betrayed unwarily into the hands of its foes, and those who wished to promote their private and bigoted designs by his valor. During the war, he gladly received authentic information, in every form, as to the progress and events of arms. After the establishment of peace and government, it was certainly a duty due from every citizen in a manly manner to explain to him the overt acts of a party to destroy religion, and liberty of conscience. The writer considered himself authorized as a sufferer by war and in the church, who had with numerous friends and relations been respectful in every and the highest degree to the commander in chief, to state the oppressions himself and his brethren were subjected to.

General Washington soon saw at Cambridge, the intention of a party to usurp over our consciences. The prayers of the president of that college, who also read the declaration of independence before the army, partook of this artful and ambitious spirit, and was so historical, so full of uncharitableness towards the foe, and so dictatorial to our army, that the general was frequently disgusted. The president of the college and other clergymen constantly endeavoured to dictate the civil and military affairs.

Anecdotes are repeated in the eastern states, in proof of the efforts of the clergy to make the commander in chief a Cromwell. By prayers, fanaticism and the sword, to establish their dominion over the credulous and passive. The president of the college was a leader in this demeanor.—The general was silent and polite, while the president was dictatorial and impertinent. It is also said, that general Washington left the station where the president of the college attended the morning prayers, and attended with other chaplains, who were more mild, meek and moderate.

This caution marked general Washington's conduct during the war, and has continued since the peace. While the governors, legislators, and leaders in the northern and eastern states have constantly and boldly infringed upon our religious liberties, and offended against the laws of peace, unity and liberty, by means of the power, craft and assiduity of the clergy.

Vermont and Connecticut have constantly exhibited in their leaders a sample of this restless spirit. Elected from the state at large, as the governor and council of Connecticut are, the influence of the clergy over the elections has controuled the votes and defeated the upright intentions of the house of representatives very often. This was remarkably displayed during the administrations of governors Huntington and Wolcott, and is continued now, under the sway of governor Trumbull and the present

upper house. We would mention the dead with caution ;—but, the living are properly the subjects of deserved investigation. Governor Trumbull—the secretary and companion of general Washington, has not cherished and preserved that toleration, candor, and charity, which religion, and our laws enforce and recommend. He, and others connected with him in business, and by many social ties—who have been honored by their country with places and rewards for themselves, their sons, relations and friends, liberally and profusely, by general Washington, have been decoyed into violations of the constitution of our country, and efforts to destroy our religious liberties.

General Washington has been extolled in thanksgiving, fast and election sermons, into a rank with Cyrus: It is to be lamented that his power and influence had not been as great as that monarch's in this particular, who preserved the sacred vessels of the temple at Jerusalem for the solemnities of religion, did not suffer his followers to divide them among themselves, as some in the States have done by the church property of every kind.

General Washington, in his official station, had no authority to interfere: The limits of his power as president were known and defined. The opinion of the most eminent lawyers in New York was transmitted to him in confirmation of the right of the Episcopalians to the church lands in Vermont—He bestowed offices upon those who were agents in the seizures, and the adjudications of the federal court have since determined fully, that the property could not be perverted from its original uses in the hands of the Episcopalians. His silence was known, observed and improved by the foe, to lead to the seizure.—Evidence may be adduced as presumptive proof, that such an event would never have taken place, had he shewn his opposition to it, or his care, that plunderers should not obtain appointments from him.

Mr. Chipman, now a senator in congress, and lately a district judge under Gen. Washington's administration, and Mr. Jacobs, the district attorney, at the same period had principal shares in the seizure. It is probable the event would never have taken place, had these two gentlemen been silent.—Both of them wished to obtain seats in congress, and this measure was to pave the way for their election, by making them popular, under the standard of sacrilege and irreligion. Mr. Chipman and Mr. Jacobs were reared and educated chiefly in the countries of Litchfield, in Connecticut and Berkshire in Massachusetts, those theatres of controversy, bigotry and spiritual tyranny.—

Mr. Jacobs had married the daughter of one of the ministers of Litchfield county. The bigotry and artifice taught there to gain power and wealth, followed these two men into Vermont.—Mr. Jacobs was disappointed as to a seat in congress, but Mr. Chipman obtained one in the senate, and the diploma of doctor of laws from Dartmouth college, in consequence of his proceedings on this occasion.

President Wheelock wanted some one to bear him company, and to palliate his wrong designs as to the church lands. The project of seizure, had originated many years before with him, but had not succeeded, until Messrs Allen, Chipman, Jacobs, Buck, Hitchcock and others secretly effected the measure, as is above stated.

After the lapse of about four years from the seizure, the cause was

brought before the federal court, judge Patterson presiding, when a full and complete decision was given in favor of the church. The trial was brought forward by the means of a suit commenced against the rector of Manchester in Vermont, to eject him, upon the law of the state, but was appealed or referred to the national judiciary. Messrs. senator Chipman, Jacobs and the main body of the lawyers, were retained on the side of those who wished to eject the rector and the church. With difficulty could the attorney for the church gain assistance. Previous to the day of trial, he offered a fee to engage Mr. senator Chipman as an assistant. He excused himself, because he was a member of the senate of the United States. But upon the opening of the court, Mr. Chipman appeared upon the opposite side. He endeavored to introduce and enforce the arguments he had used before the legislature, which led to the seizure. The judge was obliged repeatedly to inform him, that these reasons did not apply. And after a due hearing, gave his charge to the jury, who soon brought in a verdict in favor of the church. All who attended on the occasion acquiesced in the decision of the court and jury, and the reasoning of judge Patterson. Thus, after thirty years altercation upon one of the most important subjects which have been discussed in our courts, the glebes were declared to belong to the church. The confederation to pervert the property had been numerous, obstinate and persevering.

During that period it is difficult to describe the sufferings of the clergy and people, and the inroads upon religion at large. To destroy its uses totally, was the wish of a large majority. The private trespassers, some opulent speculators and land jobbers; the colleges at Dartmouth and Vermont; the independent or congregational clergy of New-England, at large, and their adherents, had confederated with the enemies of christianity in general, to pervert these glebes to private or other uses.

The Episcopal clergy, defeated in their plans and hopes, to obtain their bread from these lands, which were now chiefly under cultivation, were obliged to leave their friends and cures; They generally removed from their labors as the people were unable to support them.

Some sought for an assylum in Canada---But an act of the British Parliament defeated their design. "When the English bishops were permitted to consecrate bishops for the states, the act formed for the purpose, by a clause, prevented such bishops or clergymen ordained by them, from holding benefices within the limits of that nation." Bishop Mountain, the superintendant of Canada—Governors Clarke, and Simcoe, chief-justice Smith and others, were consulted as to permitting the clergy of Vermont and the states to exercise their functions. The people of Canada solicited their superiors in church and state, that they might have the benefit of the labors of the American clergy. This could not be done.—*Re*-ordination could not be obtained. No qualifications, and no arrangements could evade this illiberal and unchristian effect of this act of the British legislature.

Similar injuries have been done to the Episcopalians in New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode-Island, Connecticut and New-York. The donations of individuals by wills and authentic deeds, have been trespassed upon, and perverted, without the shadow of law, or even the pretence of right. In Vermont, the seizure was daringly and insolently defended upon this

plea, "That if the legislature had not the right, it had the power to seize."

The result of all the projects of the enemies to the church in Vermont, as to religion, is to root it out of the state, in a principal degree. The clergy of all orders have been distressed, however meritorious and worthy, for their piety, learning and abilities.

The sect called Edwardean, or the body known by the Illuminati, have chiefly been the cause of this. Their strides after wealth and power, have created foes to christianity at large—Some few others were joined with, or prompted on by them; and in the issue none are served.

At this time, the convention of the Episcopal church and the clergy and people in general, who belong to the church, are attempting to bring the lands into use; for the promoting of religion. Impediments are frequently cast in their way, by the froward, who are never to be satiated with war, sacrilege and irreligion.

The Episcopalians in Vermont and New-Hampshire, are numerous, respectable for their virtues, and conscientious adherence to their religion.

Overpowered by violence and numbers, they have here been patient almost to tameness. They constantly paid large sums to build and support Presbyterian, or congregational meeting houses, in their respective neighbourhoods, but met with vexation, confusions and disappointment in return. Peace and candor did not result from their love of order.

During these transactions, every effort, which a disposition to avoid altercations and lawsuits could inspire, was made on the part of the Episcopalians. They stated their situation and the condition of the Glebes to their superiors and brethren in other states—They consulted eminent civilians, conversed with coolness with their foes, and addressed many distinguished characters, not of their community, whose prudence and station ought to have prompted to become patrons of justice, and to appear superior to the attempts of malevolence, to injure others in their religious concerns; but without effect. It was too evident, that a general combination to destroy, dishearten and pillage Episcopalians, was a prevalent design among a party.

The influence of party was so great in the legislatures of Connecticut, New-Hampshire and Vermont, the Episcopalians could not obtain the legal and accustomed acts of incorporation, which were needful to defend their rights before the judicial courts.

The society in London for propagating the gospel in foreign parts, resigned its right to certain lots in New-Hampshire, to a body of men in that state and Massachusetts in trust, assigning their uses. These were, that the incumbent in the townships, for the time being, should enjoy the income of the lands, but if there was none, that the sum should be divided in equal portions among such towns and parishes as already had ministers.

These trustees petitioned the legislature for an act of incorporation, that they might gain possession of the land, and provide for the support of the clergy. This could not be obtained.

When the people of New-Hampshire found that the Glebes could not be perverted by private fraud, or legislative influence, the Illuminati sought to defeat the obtaining possession, on the part of the church, by

influencing the trespassers and the bigotted part of the community, to employ every artifice to retard and discourage the efforts, to bring them into their proper uses. Mr. Freeman of Hanover, in New-Hampshire, a member of congress, was an active man on this occasion.

The Episcopalians in Vermont also petitioned the legislature for an act of incorporation, by which they might raise means to support the clergy, but have not succeeded.

Similar petitions have been granted by the lower house of Assembly in Connecticut, but the acts have, until last May, been negatived in the upper house. In this case the executors of wills were calling upon the Episcopalians, to receive certain donations and bequests, in their hands, for the benefit of the clergy, and to give them authentic receipts—This could not be done, because the Episcopalians were not incorporated in a proper body, which was known in law; as authorized to receive monies or other property.

At the same time, every act of incorporation, which the congregationalists devised for their purposes, was granted in New-Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Episcopal church in Portsmouth was liberally endowed as early in the year 1640, with a Glebe purchased by the first settlers, and devoted to the use of that parish for ever, by a deed most accurately and carefully drawn, in all the languages, then and now appropriate to the Episcopalians. A chapel and parish house were erected and a minister inducted. The government of Massachusetts, which then had fraudulently extended its jurisdiction over the colony of New-Hampshire, sought to foil this effort to plant and endow a church. They contended with the church minister and his friends, and he removed to the West-Indies. The parish becoming vacant, the puritans took possession of this glebe, which consisted of twelve acres within the present town of Portsmouth, and of forty acres within one mile of it.

These puritans, appointed to themselves men whom they called wardens, and attempted to form a congregation, officered as an English church, and erected a meeting-house upon the Glebe, which remains as a monument of sacrilege, in the center of that town, unto this day.

One of that congregation, who had retired to England during the late war, and offered to reduce the province of New-Hampshire to its wonted obedience to the English government, provided they would make him governor of the province, also deprived the present Episcopal parish in Portsmouth, of a valuable real property, bequeathed by will to her use, and yet retains it. This man forfeited his parole with the British army, after his return to the states, not long before the late peace, and had nearly involved all the prisoners of both armies, in this way, in the most serious and poignant distresses. Under the administration of general Washington, he obtained an appointment within the State's government, with a salary of twenty-two hundred dollars a year. At the same time, he sought to defeat the design of the Episcopalians to recover the property of the church out of his possession. He sold this property to one of the most opulent men in the town, that he might confederate with him an extensive family connection against the church. He had sworn to general Sullivan, that the church should never have a minister. And when he found that a suit was commenced, he concerted a plan with the present

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secretary of the United States, to destroy the late rector of that parish, that the suit might not proceed, as it was brought according to law, in the rector's name.

To produce all the facts and anecdotes in confirmation of what appears in every part of this book, would swell its size beyond the designed limits. Some others are subjoined, in confirmation of the tyranny, which at this hour exists in full force, in New-England, to destroy our government, by undermining our religious liberties. To pursue the subject in all its windings, would be to present an important clue to many national affairs.

Confining himself principally to the subject of exposing the sacrilegious doings of a party, the writer subjoins the following information.

It is to be remembered, that all these oppressions solely result from the determinations of a party, by war, sacrilege, and public convulsions, to secure all power and wealth into the hands of certain leading laymen, and of the Edwardean and congregational clergy. Their whole history presents in every page, proof upon proof, in corroboration of this assertion. In every part of the northern states, from the first settlement of the country, these efforts have been constant and frequent. In the city of New-York, the glebes of Trinity Church have been assaulted, and at Johnstown, a colony from Scotland, which emigrated since the late peace, into that state, took possession of the church and glebe, and obstinately held them by means of every art and tyranny, until the legislature interfered and ordered them to be restored to the Episcopalians.

A notable specimen of the artifice used to gain private property, by espousing public measures, is exhibited in a story often told by the late president of Cambridge college, as passing under his observation.

Governor Wentworth, of New-Hampshire, ardently wished to promote the prosperity of that colony, or province, by introducing settlers and affording them the means of gaining education for their sons, and religious instruction for themselves and their families. He gave a charter accordingly for founding Dartmouth College. Many wise and pious men in the English nation, followed his example and endowed it. The governor himself was a proprietor of a lot of five hundred acres, part of the present village of Dresden, and township of Hanover. President Wheelock prevailed upon the governor to bestow this lot upon the college. But no sooner had he gained the deed, than Dr. Wheelock led the trustees to exchange with him, for a lot at a distance. This lot of the governor's thus became the property of president Wheelock. This increased in value, as it is near the college, and the lot exchanged for it is very inferior.

The books of divinity given in England for students in the college, to Dr. Wheelock, ~~he~~ sold afterwards to the neighbouring farmers. Innumerable instances of this kind took place in other parts of those states, in which the projectors and agents in benevolent designs enriched themselves out of charitable donations.

To further such measures, the Illuminati in their sermons, prayers and conversation, use every artifice to excite and perpetuate prejudices against all who are not enrolled with them, and engaged to further their plans. They have uncharitably held them up before religious assemblies, as obnoxious to the wrath of the Almighty, for mere speculative opinions. The

church of Rome is constantly called Anti-Christ. Thousands are doomed to eternal perdition in their explanations of the doctrines of election, predestination, and reprobation. It is frequently asserted in pulpits, that infants are now in hell, not a span long.

Such impiety and uncharitableness is constantly exhibited. To root out every peculiarity, rite, ceremony, and custom of others, is a constant aim among their champions. Opposing gowns, surplices, and clerical habits, the present president of Yale College, when he became a preacher, appeared in the pulpits with ruffles, a garnet coloured coat and white under dress. He is aped in this singularity by young candidates now. At this time however, many of his order of ministers wear black gowns, and the celebrated Dr. Stiles confessed that the puritans went too far, when they banished the surplice, the linen garment of Aaron from the use of the clergy. Notwithstanding the former rancors and declamations against the use of organs in religious assemblies, such are introduced into the meeting houses in Boston.

In Yale College, Pailey's philosophy is studied as a classic. At a recitation upon that part which relates to forms of prayer, president Dwight heard the class through; after which, one of them appealed to him for his opinion upon the subject. This was given, as decent for those who liked the custom: He confessed that a large part of the apparent extempore prayers were repeated memoriter—that this was not his own practice.—He concluded by repeating a story: "A person who had broken his leg sent for an Episcopal clergyman to pray with him on the occasion, and called upon this minister to attend so solemn an office, but, finding no collect for his purpose, he declined this duty. Upon which, according to president Dwight, the layman abandoned the minister, who had not prayers for all occasions." The peculiar manner in which president Dwight told the story raised the laugh in presence of some sons of Episcopalians, set forms of prayer at ridicule, and answered his purpose to defeat Pailey by folly. The learned president, and the distressed patient all expressed their ignorance. The provision of the prayer-book is ample; the invention of the parson must have been barren, and he was guilty of a great fault, in neglecting to be possessed of his companion and manual of devotions, at all times and all occasions.

In this idle method do the instructors in the northern colleges, sport with the rights, creeds, devotions and practices of all denominations of Christians, before their pupils.

Of the same kind of procedure, and with the same spirit of malevolence, the delusions and misrepresentations of Robinson and Barneiel have been detailed by Doctors Dwight, Morse, and the Illuminati in general. The American bigots have made themselves accessory to the mistakes of these Europeans, in order to gain a new field for clamor and public discussion, before the credulous.

Doctor Morse has been detected and undeceived by his friend and correspondent, at Hamburg. The president of Yale College, and the clergy of New-England, gave great vogue to the misrepresentations of Robinson; and in turn the tyrannies of the American Illuminati are brought to view. These have been published under the observation of Dr. Dwight, and within the state in which he resides. He had received private letters

printed pamphlets, and newspaper productions, in abundant proof of the attempts on his part to destroy the liberty and government of this country. He has been called upon to defend his proceeding, and has not done it.

The falacies of Dr. Morfe, in his American Geography, and the attempt to exalt the party, with which he is associated, upon the ruins of candor, truth and liberty, have been exhibited to him. He confessed his error in part. This is to be expected again at his hands, and at the hands of Dr. Dwight.

Prejudices and delusions of this kind, half plunged us into the war of 1775, with England. The same practices brought us into a share of the present confusions of Europe. And these doings of Doctors Dwight and Morfe, concerning the Illuminati, have nearly engaged us in a civil war at home. They have disturbed our councils, excited feuds among our fellow citizens, and degraded our religion.

An equally serious consideration is, when we have such proofs of the inveteracy of a party, under the sanction of promoting religion, who have assumed an influence in political affairs also; it becomes us conscientiously to ward off future infringements. If that period should arrive, when such a band of politicians and religionists should confederate with some usurper, who would wish to place himself at the head of this nation, as a monarch, obedience to HIS religious, as well as HIS political opinions, would be demanded. The confederacy would obtain double energy, and all the horrors of despotism multiply from the nefarious proceedings of such a body.

The delusion would be more formidable, and successful, as ambition would borrow the sacred garb of a religion promoting benevolence and peace, to plunge us into broils and wars, to provide for placemen and adherents. The pulpit and sword would be confederated, on the side of church and state: " *The leading minds and most influential characters among the clergy, will then be courted, and the views of youth in this department will be turned on those men; and the road to promotion and employment in the church will be obstructed against such as will not worship the general idol."

• See the Defence of the Constitution of the United States, by John Adams, esq.

F I N I S.

